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BYS Minutes 11/12/2008

Minutes of the Board of Youth Services November 12, 2008

Meeting called to order at 7:05

Present: Leon Cantor, Mary DeCoursey, Donna Dolan, Lynn Horgan, Joan Axelrod Lehrich, Carlene Newell, Jeannette Mills, Elizabeth Oppedisano, Joan Robbio, Cindy Sheridan, Lori Talanian

Absent: Maryanne Andrew, Robert Bongiorno and Kevin Flood

Agenda

Coalition Update: The Board welcomed Director of Health and Human Services Christine Connolly Sharkey and new Executive Director of the Arlington Health and Safety Coalition, Colleen Leger. Christine introduced Colleen, invited members to get to know her, orient her to the workings of the Board and visit the office any time. Board members inquired about the goals of the Coalition in this first year and how the board can help. **In the upcoming year, the focus will be on capacity building of community members, drug program and physicians, plans to implement the Diversion Program and build its sustainability.** Next Coalition meeting is 11/20 at 5:30 at the Senior Center. Mark your calendars for the town wide Coalition meeting in the spring.

AHS Health and Safety Day: Jeannette and Carlene reported that the recent high school event was a success. Members credited Andrea Razzi, AHS Intervention Coordinator, for her remarkable efforts and expressed interest in inviting her to a Board meeting in 2009. Conversations ensued regarding topics covered and the need to reach the youth earlier and earlier. Leon reminded members that the Coalition applies not only to drugs and alcohol, but also underlying issues such as bullying and cyberbullying. A thank you note will be sent to the organizers and/or Advocate on behalf of the Board.

Needs Assessment Subcommittee: (Members, Maryanne, Mary, Carlene, Lynn and Kevin) Lynn inquired on behalf of the subcommittee whether to move forward with the needs assessment in the new year given budget cuts and uncertainty. Leon said "don't wait" and Donna commented that the results may provide the necessary data the town needs. Members provided feedback on current plans of the subcommittee and Lynn reported the plan is to coordinate focus groups to meet in February.

AYCC: Joan Axelrod Lehrich reported that the subcommittee met to discuss AYCC workings and issues around how to justify continued funding given budget constraints. Leon clarified components of Advocate article and informed he plans to design an outline for the Board to clarify where money comes from. Leon was interviewed by Grace Carpenter for publicity purposes

Diversion: Cindy reported they are laying out the program, working on the intake process and how to gauge success

of the program now and in the future. Contract development with the students will include a community service component. Cindy asked for help and ideas regarding community service options that are more meaningful to the needs of the students.

Alcohol Awareness: Elizabeth provided handout on Alateen services in Arlington. The programs and services are open to youth in surrounding towns as well. Programs occurring at the AHS include "The Laramie Project" in memory of Matthew Shepard. Elizabeth gave historical information on the SADD club and stated this is her 26th year Elizabeth as Advisor of this club at AHS. There will be anniversary celebrations this year. MADD will not be providing the multimedia show to the schools this year because it costs too much to offer it. In the past this program was very successful and addressed destructive decisions, drinking & driving and safety issues. Elizabeth asked if the Board had suggestions for a motivational speaker who can serve all the schools.

First Step: Lynn conveyed information from Elaine Shea and Mary Deyst on the support group's status. There are currently seven members in the group which has been in transition for a while. They met and discussed the referral process with Karen Kelley who is the new domestic violence officer at the Arl. Police Department. Efforts are in place to connect with local agencies and develop a trifold palm card that contains support & emergency information related to domestic violence. This is being coordinated with Chief Ryan and the intention is for officers to distribute these cards as applicable and to make cards available in specific locations around town.

Website: Leon reported that the graduate students will design this. Joan Axelrod Lehigh offered to help.

Holiday Help: Donna and Lori are coordinating the efforts which are underway for the Thanksgiving and Christmas drives. Donna reported there are new people and staff members involved this year. An effort will be made to educate them on the focus and goals of holiday help. Volunteers will be needed for both events and sixty or more the day of present delivery. Leon mentioned AYCC is coordinating with other programs (St. Agnes, Jack Bowler). He suggested purchasing food gift cards for Thanksgiving baskets.

New Business: Leon informed there will be a presentation on Marge and _____ Johnson at the next Board of Selectman meeting on 11/14/08. A proclamation will be made and Friday, December 12th dedicated to the Johnsons.

The Food Pantry will accept donations on Fridays from 1-3pm at 21 Marathon St.

Cindy made a motion to adjourn (**time?**), seconded by Joan Axelrod Lehigh.